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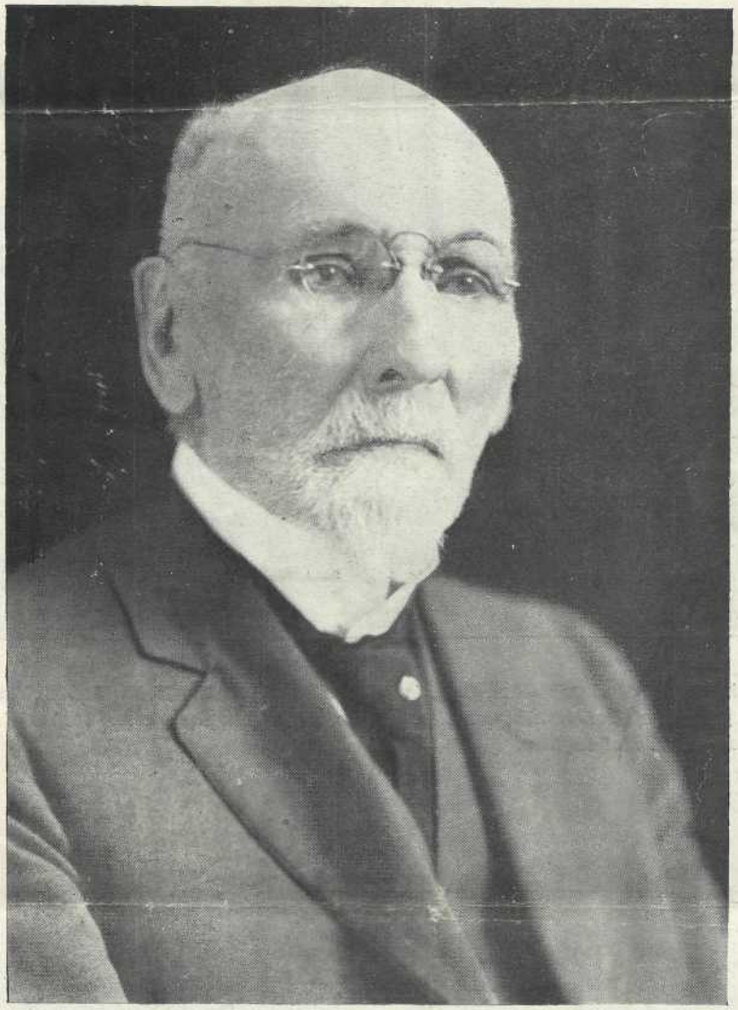
MOTOR SPARKS

Published by General Motors of Canada, Limited Milton Bergey—Editor

OSHAWA, NOVEMBER 23, 1921



"HUSH"---He Is Asleep

The weary body of our friend, companion, and benefactor, has fallen to Rest—like a child drops off to sleep among his toys.

Hale and hearty—active in mind and body—interested in public affairs up to the last, Mr. Robert McLaughlin, Oshawa's Grand Old Man, answered the call of the Great Beyond, on the 23rd day of November, 1921, aged 85 years.

We who saw him daily, will miss his familiar figure, and all Canada will mourn his loss.

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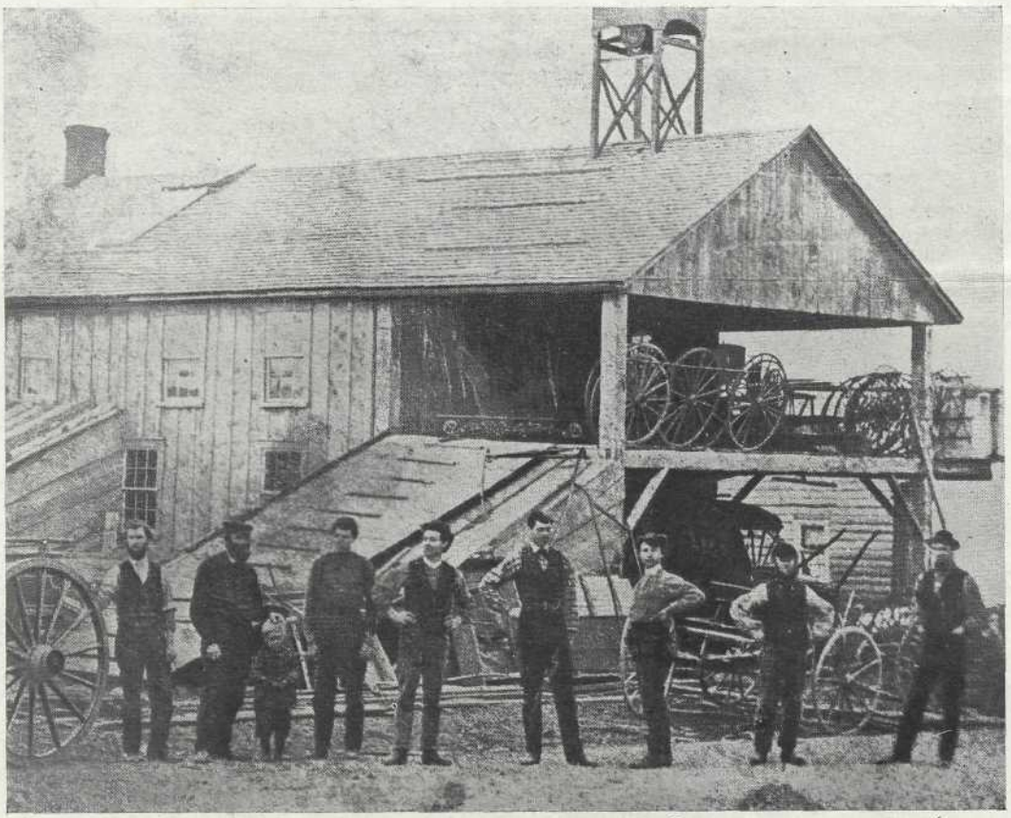
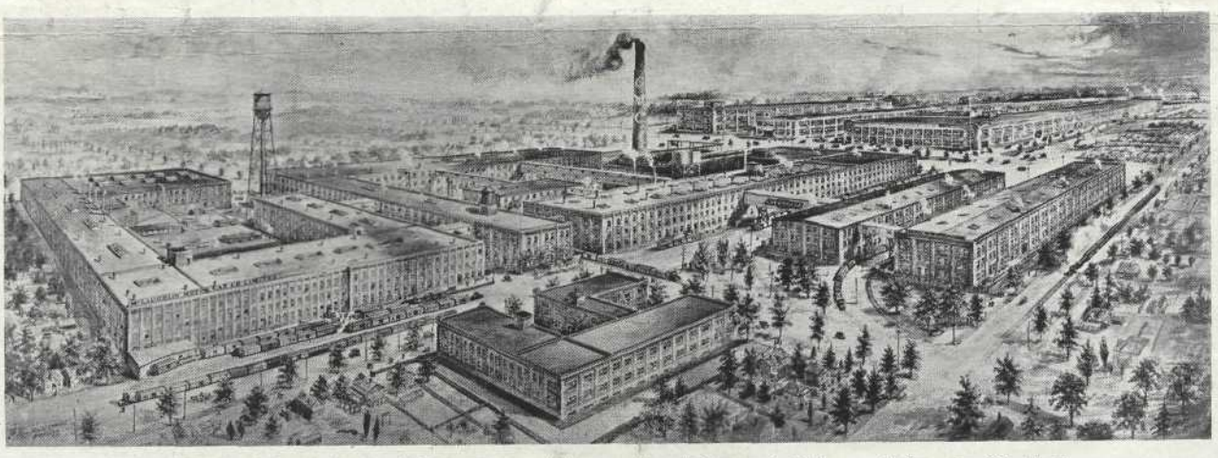
In view of Mr. Robert McLaughlin's death the story of his wonderful business career will be of interest to every employee. The following pages are a reprint of a book issued a few years ago which explains several details in it that do not exactly correspond with conditions to-day.—Editors's Note.



The original shop at Enniskillen, Ont., built in 1869 where Mr. Robt. McLaughlin began the manufacture of McLaughlin vehicles. The small boy in the picture beside his father is Mr. George W. McLaughlin.



Group of factories at Oshawa comprising units of General Motors of Canada, Limited.

A Great Canadian Industry and Its Founder

By Milton Bergey

PROGRESS, the acquiring of knowledge and the attainment of wisdom depend greatly on environment. The immediate surroundings weave their magic forces into personality, influencing the trend of character of any people. The sturdy Scot on his rugged moors and scraggy highlands developed a strength, physique and a determination of purpose which have been a deciding factor in the arts of war and peace.

Patriotism, and a keen sense of humor, are characteristics of the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle. The Englishman—hemmed in by the sea—has sailed about and exerted his influence over all the peoples of the world. The Frenchman, Italian, Greek, and the Swiss, each bears the stamp of characteristics formed by the country he inhabits.

In America and particularly in Canada, environment has been conducive to the development of the man cosmopolitan in his temperament and character. The influences of vast stretches of prairie, lofty, picturesque mountain ranges, lakes, rivers, forests, mines and industrial centers have made the Canadian the all-round man, "four-square to all the winds that blow."

Until comparatively recent years, the national and social life of Canadians has been limited by inadequate transportation facilities. Railroads have done much to improve conditions and Hydro Radials will do more. And yet there are many men and women who are unable to extend their circle of experience, owing to the fact that they live in isolated sections of our vast country.

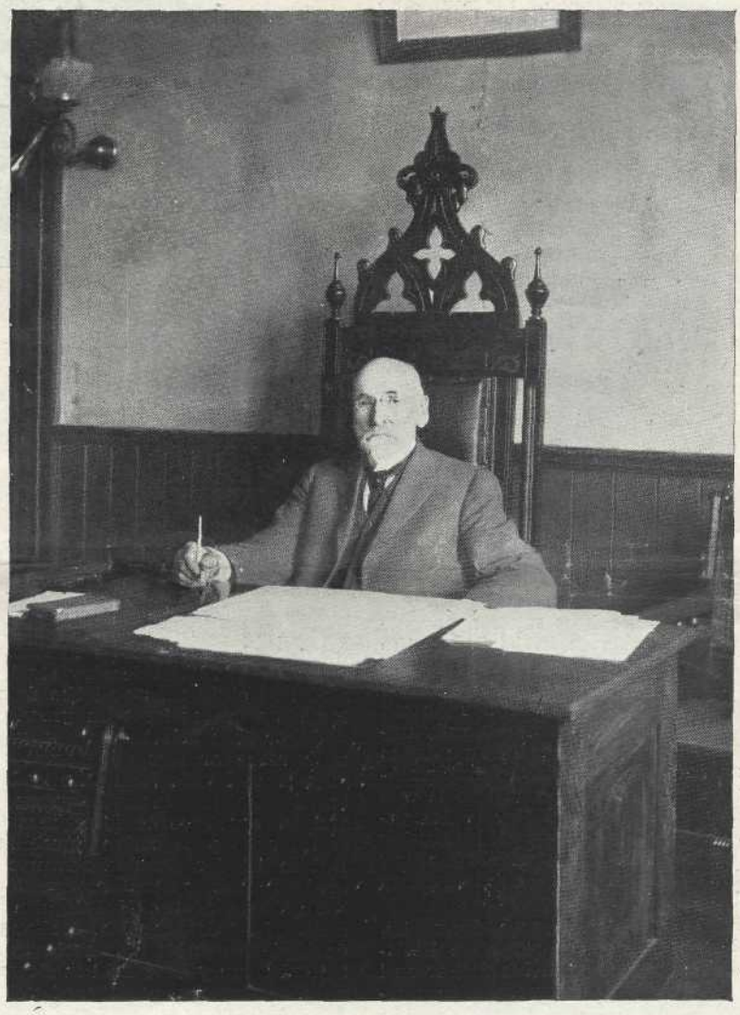
Canada is a country of vast distances. Large tracts of forest and prairie have been natural barriers to dense population. People have not been able to mingle so freely with their kind on account of large areas of unpopulated territory.

If it is true that travel, new scenes, new faces and new experiences do develop a people to higher standards, the importance of rapid methods of transportation is easily realized.

The Automobile has done and is doing much to enable people to associate with neighbors and friends. The motor car has conquered time and space, enabling the Canadian to use to advantage his spare moments that would otherwise be wasted. This fuller life of freedom and self culture, the result of closer association, is one of the by-products of the automobile industry in Canada, and with the automobile industry the name of McLaughlin will for ever be associated.

McLaughlin motor cars and other motor cars associated with McLaughlin enterprises, are a recognized factor in Canadian industry and Canadian transportation. No historian will ever portray the thousands of homes to which the motor car has been the greatest boon of modern times; how in isolated sections the quick dispatch of the McLaughlin Six has enlarged the horizon, made for a higher scale of living and extended the bonds of friendship. The motor car—symbol of life, power, speed, harmony, grace and easy effort—has revolutionized transportation methods in Canada and to the name McLaughlin must be attributed much of the credit for the extent the industry has progressed.

To-day in Oshawa the air is echoing with the hum of vast factories, all turning out their daily quota of automobiles which are shipped to all parts of the Dominion. A vast host of busy workers intent on service are building for Canadians better



Always interested in efficient and progressive municipal control, Mr. McLaughlin was induced for a term to sit at the head of the town council as Mayor of Oshawa. His regime was marked with the same judgment, fairness and success so characteristic of his business career.

cars for quick and economical transportation.

To Mr. Robert McLaughlin, now enjoying the sunset of life, it must be a source of satisfaction to see a business reared by himself and his two worthy sons spreading its influence and distributing its product from coast to coast. But back of it all were years of effort, of obstacles to be overcome, of competition, the records of which rival in interest the product of the novelists' pen.

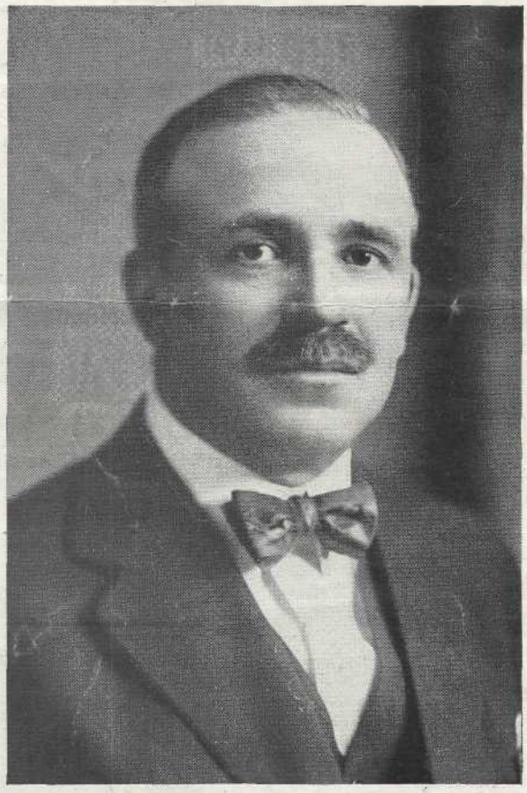
Discontent has ever played a prominent part in progress. Men chafed by annoying circumstances rebel and launch out to create a more harmonious environment. So it was with Mr. Robert McLaughlin —the man of Durham County. To such a one as he the forest was something more than a junk heap of wood to be cut down and burned in the clearings. Each tree had its message. Hickory, basswood, maple, oak, elm, beech, ironwood, pine, cedar, birch and many others, all had their place in the great plan, and it is not so strange after all that he should grow weary of the mundane duties of the farm.

Even as a young man he spent his spare time in making axe handles, whiffle trees, double trees and other articles of utility. He took as much pride in turning out a neatly fashioned, well finished and durable axe handle as the average farmer takes in his prize stock. The product of his toil was sold to the nearby farmers who were not gifted with the same skill in craftsmanship. His heart was not in his fifty acre farm, so he built a shop in Enniskillen in 1869 and started business with a staff of one journeyman carriage builder, one blacksmith, one apprentice, with himself as manager designer and painter.

Mr. McLaughlin had hitherto built several cutters and wagons in a little shop on his farm, but his actual start in the business dates from the Fall of 1869. And at this date the initial steps were taken which resulted in the formation of the McLaughlin Carriage Co., Limited.

It is strange how some apparently minor incidents in life turn the tide of succeeding events far reaching in their importance. The whole destiny of a man's life has often been changed by some seemingly unimportant happening. Circumstance is an important factor in determining a man's avocation and so it was in the case of Mr. Robt. McLaughlin. Being ambitious, and having an active mind, he started thinking seriously about his circumstances and his future.

While on his 50 acre farm, he, realizing that prospects were limited, took counsel with his father and his friends and determined to purchase an additional 50 acres adjoining, if the owner would accept $90 per acre. Had the transaction been consumated, Mr. McLaughlin would doubtless have continued farming and been too fully occupied to start the nucleus of a business destined to become Canada's largest automotive industry.



MR. R. S. McLAUGHLIN

The manufacture of Carriages, Buggies, Wagons and Cutters was an infant industry in 1869. The country's needs were supplied principally by small manufacturers who distributed their product locally. As season after season went on Mr. McLaughlin had to go farther afield to dispose of his factory's output. In the year 1872 the factory staff consisted of eight men and the demand for his vehicles kept on growing.

Other manufacturers regarded with more or less contempt this man from Enniskillen who had ventured into the manufacturing art and were not loathe to express their feelings to prospective purchasers. But in 1877 a decided advance was made in the general recognition of the quality of the McLaughlin product. In this year Mr. McLaughlin decided to exhibit his carriages at a United County Fair held in Bowmanville. Quite a variety of vehicles were shown by Bowmanville manufacturers, by Mr. McLaughlin and by several other smaller exhibitors. The result of the judging was that Mr. McLaughlin's three vehicles all took first prizes and were sold at the Fair for good prices.

Mr. McLaughlin persistently held to his idea of building nothing but the best. He would not stint on quality or cheapen his product, to meet a lower price. And in addition to quality, he spared no efforts to enhance the beauty of his product. Being quite an adept in the art of landscape painting, Mr. McLaughlin devoted much time to the decorative effects of his vehicles. Thus the McLaughlin product early in the history of the industry attained a reputation for service and artistic beauty.

As time went by, Mr. McLaughlin felt the need of a larger center for his efforts. The lack of shipping facilities and the shortage of skilled labor were serious handicaps in a village so remote as Enniskillen. A railroad town was necessary, so in 1879 Mr. McLaughlin moved to Oshawa with all his employees and erected the building now known as Brook's Livery. Here the business took on a new impetus and flourished as the products came to be more generally and favorably known.

In the year 1893 Mr. McLaughlin re-organized the business, taking in-

to partnership his two sons, Mr. Geo. and Mr. R. S. McLaughlin. Having previously received a good training, the two boys proved a valuable asset to the business and adapted their abilities to extend in volume an already flourishing industry.

Success is ever the reward of industry and well directed effort. Mr. McLaughlin started in business with the determination to build quality vehicles. In spite of the worst kind of competition, he refused to cheapen his product. He believed ultimately that purchasers would realize the advantages of buying goods that would stand up. The wisdom of his judgment soon became evident. So successful did the business become that a small wholesale policy was decided on in 1888.

Another feature that helped to popularize the McLaughlin line of vehicles was the McLaughlin Patent Buggy Gear. Mr. McLaughlin invented a new type of buggy gear and secured patents for same. All vehicles were equipped with this new feature and sent out to different sections of the country, and a great demand for McLaughlin Buggies was built up. This one feature possibly more than anything else helped to advertise nationally the McLaughlin Trade Mark. The invention was one that attracted attention wherever it was shown. It very soon became hard to keep up with the nation-wide demand for McLaughlin Patent Buggies. Other designs new to the trade were devised; new styles of tops were featured; brass and rubber washers were introduced and the McLaughlin buggies became known as quiet, easy running buggies. All this progress was due to the fact that the executives spared no effort in designs and appointment that would please the discriminating purchaser in Canada.

Very soon after the advent of Mr. G. W. and Mr. R. S. McLaughlin to the business, the quarters on Simcoe St. became too cramped for the volume of business done. An exchange was made with the town whereby the firm acquired the old Gibbs Furniture Factory. The opinion was quite prevalent among Oshawa residents that the new quarters were entirely too spacious for the McLaughlin Carriage Company. Several prominet citizens even went so far as to interview the principals of the company suggesting that they sublet a good portion of the new premises to several smaller industries. But the McLaughlins had faith in their product and faith in the future of the industry. They occupied the entire floor space and in a very short time found even this building inadequate for their flourishing business.

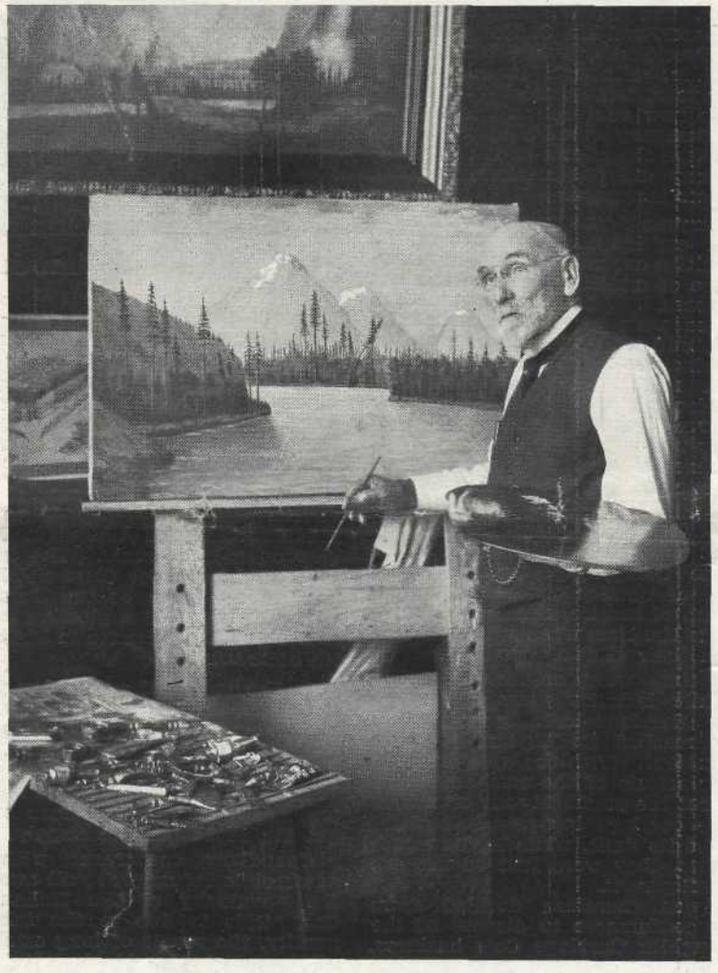
The pathway to success is not always strewn with roses. He who would climb to the highest pinnacle must resolve to overcome many obstacles. Ideals, however high, can be attained only by persistently working towards them in spite of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. So, in 1899 the McLaughlin Carriage Comapny, Limited, was forced to face a severe setback. The entire factory was destroyed by fire and the hopes of the men were temporarily dashed to the ground. Undaunted, however, the principals of the Company decided to forge ahead in spite of serious handicaps. To Mr. R. S. McLaughlin was assigned the task of moving the employees to Gananoque where the factory of the Thousand Island Carriage Co. was available.

For one year Mr. R. S. McLaughlin remained in Gananoque with the staff from Oshawa factory, and by double decking the factory and running day and night, he was successful in turning out about three thousand vehicles. This enabled the Company to hold their trade and keep their goods on the market until the new and larger quarters could be built. There still are a good many McLaughlin employees in Oshawa who frequently talk of their experiences while in the Gananoque factory. After a year's absence, Mr. R. S. McLaughlin moved back from Gananoque to Oshawa with his employees and the Company occupied the new and larger premises which are still in service and now utilized in the manufacture of McLaughlin automobiles.

After being installed in the new plant, the business grew so fast that in a very short time the demand for McLaughlin vehicles all over the Dominion was greater than the supply.

No history will ever relate all the vicissitudes of failure and success in the steady growth of this mammoth industry. Many a time the difficulties in the way seemed too great to be overcome. Many other manufacturers found it necessary to discontinue business, and of all the institutions in this line of business the McLaughlin Carriage Co. was the outstanding success.

Many factors contributed to this success, but the greatest factor of all was the persistence in the minds and hearts of the executives of the McLaughlin Carriage Company. "One Grade Only and that the Best," was the Company's slogan, and it was religiously adhered to. No inferior material was used to



Mr. Robt. McLaughlin was an artist. He has painted many beautiful pictures now the treasured property of his friends and relations. He daily occupied an hour or so of his time at his favorite art, having his office arranged as a studio.

manufacture their products. If tests showed second grade lumber, it was not utilized. The reputation for quality in this way became associated with the McLaughlin trade mark. In the succeeding years, during which the McLaughlin name has become associated with "Canada's Standard Car," the McLaughlin Trade Mark still stands for "One Grade Only and that the Best."

Methods of transportation began to show signs of a change. In the United States the motor car was gradually displacing the horse-drawn vehicle where speed was an essential feature, and so it became evident especially to the junior members of the Company, that motor car transportation was going to be an important rival to the carriage business.

Many discussions were held as to the wisdom of embarking upon a new industry. Finally, the logic of the junior members of the firm prevailed, and it was decided to enter the field of motor manufacture.

In 1907 a new organization was formed in the name of The McLaughlin Motor Car Company, Ltd., with Mr. R. S. McLaughlin as President, Mr. G. W. McLaughlin as Treasurer, and Mr. O. Hezzelwood as Vice-President. Mr. Robert McLaughlin, although in his seventieth year, was perfectly agreeable to the new venture, and joined the new Company as a Director. In the meantime the efforts of the Carriage Company did not slacken, and the business increased.

Everyone conversant with the motor car industry is aware of the difficulties encountered in the manufacture of motor vehicles in the last 15 years. Internal combustion engines were at an experimental stage, and no standards of practice or principles had been established which might guide engineers in manufacturing. Much experimenting was done. A great deal of money was lost in arriving at correct fundamental engineering principles which made the foundation of the present success of the McLaughlin motor car.

But through it all the principals of the Company maintained their ideals of quality of goods and excellence of service, and looked hopefully to the time when success would crown their efforts.

So time went on, and the McLaughlin industry grew in importance. Carriage building had seemingly reached its highest point in production. With the eyes of seers, the principals of the company realized that the possibility for expansion in the carriage business had about reached its limit, while in the motor business, they were just on the eve of development.

It was therefore decided from many conferences to dispose of the McLaughlin Carriage Co's business, and devote the plant and facilities in Oshawa to the manufacture of motor vehicles exclusively.

In the year 1915, the carriage department of the business was sold to the Carriage Factories, Limited.

MR. GEO. W. McLAUGHLIN

A second motor organization known as the Chevrolet Motor Company of Canada, Limited, was formed, with Mr. G. W. McLaughlin, President, Mr. G. W. Hezzelwood, Secretary, and Mr. R. S. McLaughlin, Treasurer and Director.

The carriage plant was at once re-arranged and adapted to the manufacturing of Chevrolet Motor cars on a large scale. The instantaneous demand for Chevrolet Motor cars in all parts of the Dominion will ever stand as a glowing tribute to the public confidence in McLaughlin built vehicles.

In the course of a very few years, the Chevrolet had sprung from obscurity until now it ranks second in Canada in number of cars sold. Although production schedules have been materially increased each year, demand has ever been and is yet far in advance of supply.

Canadians conversant with the automobile industry are all aware of the popularity of the McLaughlin Car. This is due to the inherent quality, the result of long established manufacturing ideals. It is due to the strict adherence to the slogan, "One Grade only and that the Best."

In 1919 the McLaughlin Carriage Co., Limited, ceased to exist as an active company. But it did not meet the fate of many of its contemporaries. Its end was but a transition to make way for the larger and greater corporation. While at the zenith of its success, with an untarnished name for fair dealing, with an enviable reputation for quality goods, the McLaughlin Carriage Co., Limited, was merged as a unit of the world's greatest automotive industry, known as General Motors of Canada, Limited. But while its name has been dropped, the good policies of Mr. Robt. McLaughlin which built up the Carriage Company are still adhered to in the motor car industry. That quality has become definitely associated with the McLaughlin Trade Mark. The McLaughlin Carriage Company, during its half century of prosperous existence, contributed greatly to the comfort, convenience and happiness of many thousands of Canadians. Approximately a quarter million carriages, buggies and sleighs, "One gade only and that the best"—were manufactured and distributed in all parts of the Dominion.

It is a source of satisfaction to the principals of the Company to realize that tens of thousands of these vehicles are still in active service from Halifax to far off Victoria.

No author or historian will ever

be able to do justice to the big service the McLaughlin Carriage Company rendered Canada and the Canadian people. The part they played in building up the family pride of ownership, in facilitating a freer mingling of people in many communities, in widening the circle of life for the farmer in isolated sections and in establishing for Canada a reputation for quality, will ever remain an unwritten book.

A new and greater organization has evolved from the foundations so well laid by Mr. Robt. McLaughlin and his sons. General Motors of Canada, Limited, a $10,000,000 Corporation has taken up the reins of power, with the McLaughlin personnell at the head and Mr. R. S. McLaughlin, President

The successes and failures in life are governed by fixed laws. Working in harmony with correct principles brings success, just as violation of too many natural laws invites failure. Little did Mr. Robt. McLaughlin think when he struggled to achieve perfection in his workmanship in the early days that the enterprise he so well founded, would ever be associated with the largest business institution in the world. Nor did Mr. R. S. and Mr. G. W. McLaughlin realize the part they would later be called on to play in big business and in the large financial and industrial problems of the world.

Other branches of manufacture will also form a part of the undertakings of General Motors of Canada. Tractors, for more efficient farming, trucks for more economical hauling, lighting systems for suburban homes, and many other allied enterprises come under the extensive programme laid out by the Directors. In fact the scope of the field to be covered can hardly be estimated Even now there is a daily production of one hundred and fifty motor cars and this will be materially increased when the plants of the Olds Motor Works get well under way.

This is the age of specialization. The resources of capital and labor combine to produce economically the things needed to make society happy, and of all industries in Canada, the automotive industry ranks with the very highest in importance, in amount of capital invested, in quality and quantity of labor employed, and in the service it gives to society, and the stability it gives to our country's industries.

*To Mr. Robert McLaughlin, comfortably enjoying life's sunset, the vista is one of glory and of pride. In reminiscent mood he sees his early efforts, his hardships, his triumphs. He remembers his ideals and how he battled to adhere strictly to them. Various stages of the growth and development of the institution he founded, and which bears his name, enhance the pleasure of old age as memory recalls the picture.

Success has rewarded his efforts, but what is greater, he enjoys the reward of happiness in the consciousness of work well done, a life so lived as to augment the pride every Canadian takes in the industrial achievement of his country.

Although past 80 years of age, Mr. Robert McLaughlin enjoys life to the full. His daily visit to the office where he keeps abreast with the institution's progress, serves as an inspiration in punctuality to younger men. He has time to indulge his aesthetic nature, and spends much time in landscape and portrait painting having produced many sketches that would do justice to Canada's leading artists.

Always a man of high ideals, he keeps well posted by reading the best writers. He takes an active interest in Canadian and international politics, and a half hour's chat with him on current topics is educative, instructive and pleasing.

May he long be spared to enjoy the success of his efforts and serve to inspire Canadians with those high ideals which his life exemplified.

"Build thee more stately mansions
Oh, my soul;
While the swift seasons roll,
Leave thy low vaulted past,
Let each new mansion,
Nobler than the last
Lift thee to heaven with a dome
more vast
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown self
By life's unresting sea."

—The Chambered Nautilus.

*Written several years ago.—Editor's Note.

CAPTAIN OLIVER HEZZELWOOD became associated with Mr. Robt. McLaughlin early in his career as a carriage manufacturer. He became a stockholder, executive head and director. When the Company's business in Toronto grew to large proportions, Mr. Hezzelwood was put in charge of the Toronto Branch which he managed successfully for many years. At the outbreak of the world war, Mr. Hezzelwood dropped all business of every civilian nature and volunteered his services to his country. He was given the rank of Captain and did much work as a recruiting officer and later he was sent overseas on a special mission. Mr. Hezzelwood lives on Lowther Ave., Toronto, Ont.

"SUNSET"

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Robt. McLaughlin had an air of welcome and good cheer. Being of artistic temperament, Mr. McLaughlin gave expression to his taste in the selection of flowers, trees and shrubs. A visit to the McLaughlin home was always a delight.

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